



## **Land Use Caucus Focus Group January 4, 2012**

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### **MEETING SUMMARY California Water Plan Update 2013 Land Use Caucus Focus Group January 4, 2012 12:30pm - 4:00pm MWH – 3321 Power Inn Road, Sacramento CA**

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Rich Jurich, Department of Water Resources, welcomed the participants both in the room and on the webinar to this land use focus group. He explained that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a proposal to develop alternative future urban and agricultural footprints as part of the analysis of future uncertainties facing water managers for use in Water Plan Update 2013. The group will hear from UC Davis researchers about the UPlan model for determining future urban footprint under different population growth scenarios and land development decisions. The meeting will also discuss a proposal from DWR staff to use UPlan to estimate future effects of urbanization on irrigated land area. Together this information will be used with other tools to explore the uncertainty associated with future irrigated agricultural water use.

#### **Summary of How the Water Plan Has Used Land Use Information in the Past**

Rich provided a brief overview of the Water Plan and how land use information was incorporated in the Update 2009 of the Water Plan as well as the proposal for Update 2013. He explained that DWR is proposing to apply the UPlan model to estimate future urban footprints. The proposal is to develop alternative future urban and agricultural footprints in Water Plan Update 2013. Rich also reviewed the stakeholder outreach and feedback they have received so far in the process.

Bruce Gwynne suggested that DWR include California Department of Fire and Forestry Protection in their stakeholder outreach on this topic.

Al Herson asked if density changes are being considered in the different scenarios. Cliff Moriyama added that building code updates should be factored in as well. Rich agreed both will be considered factors.

#### **Application of UPlan**

Nate Roth, UC Davis, provided an overview of the UPlan Model and how it will be used to estimate future urban footprints. Nate explained that the model allows them to test a wide variety of policy,

planning and investment alternatives. The model creates a consistent set of rules and criteria to test the alternatives and allows them to respond to a wide variety of statutes requiring more accurate forecasts than in the past. He explained the model is rule based and is not statistically calibrated.

Nate walked the group through the model and its application.

The group asked for clarification on what is included in the employment calculation. Nate explained it includes the number of employees who are going to end up in that area that are earning an income in a place that required development such as brick and mortar employment. It excludes field workers and home-based employment since they do not require new development. He explained schools generally fall into employment, but again this is a rule based model and can be customized.

Nate clarified that the model can incorporate critical habitat and wetlands.

Danny Merkley asked if nursery operations would be included in agriculture. Nate explained the model should classify that based on the specific project.

The group asked about population growth due to infill and redevelopment. Mike McCoy explained for redevelopment the model does not count the population as new; instead it acknowledges that the dispersed population would be redistributed back into the same acreage at a higher density. For infill development the model would assume it is a new population.

Elizabeth Patterson asked how the model would incorporate changes in General Plans. Nate responded that the rules can change as a General Plan is amended, he also pointed out the model could help local decision makers evaluate possible changes.

Bruce Gwynne asked about the scale of the model, Nate explained the model scales nicely.

Danny Merkley asked how the model considers regulatory changes such as the anticipated Delta Plan which will require General Plan amendments. Bruce elaborated that the Delta Plan is connected to a lot of other local planning issues; it is not independent. Mike McCoy mentioned this is more of a policy issue. Lisa Beutler mentioned that there are two issues, the capacity to accept the rules of the plan and the policy from the plan and how it feeds back into the model.

Cliff Moriyama asked if the model has the capacity to take market trends and fluctuations like the housing market into account. Nate explained it is limited due to the data available. Cliff offered to speak with him off line about possible data he has access to.

The group expressed concern with the use of the word "sprawl" as a development type.

## Proposal to Develop Alternative Future Urban and Ag Footprints – Use in the Water Plan

Tom Hawkins, DWR, presented the proposed application of UPlan to develop alternative future urban and agricultural footprints as part of the analysis of future uncertainties facing water managers for use in Water Plan Update 2013.

He explained the proposal is to input population and demographic into UPlan, which would provide an output of urban footprint and an overlay of agricultural footprint. He explained the purpose of the model is to identify the agricultural land likely to be converted to urban, so that they can project likely irrigated agricultural use in the future scenarios.

Tom reviewed the possible list of population and demographic data that could be used as inputs. The group spent time discussing the list; Mike McCoy mentioned that MPOs are projecting lower growth than Department of Finance; however DOF is working on new projections taking the economic trends into consideration. Marla Hambright mentioned that the State is mandated to use DOF projections in planning. The group flagged the data set for Infill “How We Will Grow” should be reconsidered.

Lisa Beutler flagged that since this will be rolled out to the public, the group should think about what kind of educational webinars or workshops would be needed, one example could be a webinar to explain the population projection.

## Discussion

The group was given a handout with discussion questions.

### Is it clear what is being proposed for Update 2013?

The group tended to agree that Tom’s presentation made the proposal more clear, however a lot of time was spent going through the model itself which was confusing for many people. Lisa Beutler flagged that the details of the tool and the model should be presented to the technical groups like SWAN, whereas the stakeholders will be more interested in the set of rules applied.

Lisa Beutler mentioned the evolution of the Water Plan, and how for the 2013 Plan the rules about what water managers should be able to influence are starting to change. Plan is not to set policy, but rather statements about likely scenarios and more information than just simply reacting. She explained it is very important this message is understood and that the tools are transparent. Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR, added that 10 years ago it was about what water managers do given everything else and now it is about integration.

Al Herson pointed out that the DWR team needs to identify and use consistent terminology. For example he mentioned “land development decisions” is misleading, he suggested “land use policies” instead. Kamayar suggested “development patterns”; Elizabeth Patterson suggested “land use planning policy effects.”

Kamyar clarified that since this is in the Water Plan, he wanted to be clear that DWR is not trying to predict the future or trying to influence policy, the end goal is to consider enough of the uncertainties to make sure the recommendations made about water management strategies are valuable – these scenario is value neutral. Al Herson mentioned that it gets confusing considering the Land Use Resource Management Strategy that recommends compact development is good. Elizabeth Patterson mentioned that compact urban development is already a State policy.

Danny Merkley voiced the concern he has is although it is not the purpose of the model, it could provide a structure to look at agricultural water use by commodity and provide a tool for people to say what to grow where simply based on water use. He explained there are many other factors and considerations that go into making decisions about where crops are grown. Although staff once again clarified that is not the intended use of the tool, Danny explained that it is very common for uninformed people to misuse tools and information that way. He urged the group to be thoughtful and careful in the way the information is framed and presented. Cliff explained that he shares this concern about property rights.

Tamara Cronin cautioned that the explanation of the modeling process should explain that this is not all decisions and work that will be done by the State.

Kristen (USGS) mentioned that the images were most clear (especially the ones that Tom Hawkins shared to illustrate what the model will be used to do).

## **Next Steps**

The group agreed to fill out the remaining questions in a survey monkey and then have a subsequent meeting or conference call/webinar to discuss further once DWR has compiled the answers.